

REMARKS

The above-referenced application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action mailed March 3, 2004. The Applicant hereby cancels claims 1-6, 8-22, 37-39, and 43-45 without prejudice for possible prosecution in a continuation application. The Applicant previously canceled claims 7 and 40-42. New claims 46-66 have been added and it is respectfully submitted that these additional claims do not introduce new subject matter, are fully supported by the application, and are patentable over the prior art. Prompt and favorable consideration of these claims is earnestly sought.

In the Office Action, claims 1-3, 8-11, 21, 37, and 38 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,697,946 to Hopper et al. By the present amendment, claims 1-3, 8-11, 21, 37, and 38 have been canceled. The Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of these claims be withdrawn.

The Office Action rejected claims 4, 17-20, and 22 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,697,546 to Hopper et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,324,270 to Kayan et al. By the present amendment, the Applicants have canceled claims 4, 17-20, and 22. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of these claims be withdrawn.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's indication that Claims 23-36 are allowed and that Claims 5, 6, 12-16, and 39 were objected to, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 5, 6, 12-16, and 39 have been rewritten in independent form, corresponding to new claims 46, 59, 60-64, and 65 respectively, and are now believed to be in condition for allowance.

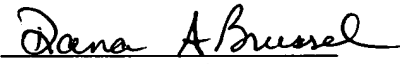
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Claims 47-58 depend directly or indirectly from new independent claim 46 while claim 66 depends directly from new independent claim 65. It is respectfully submitted that these claims are also in condition for allowance.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all claims pending in the application, namely claims 23-36 and 46-66, are in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner desire a telephonic interview to resolve any outstanding matters, he is sincerely invited to contact the undersigned at (631) 501-5713.

Respectfully submitted,

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